



EST. 1987

April 3, 2017

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Nathaniel J. Davis, Sr., Deputy Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Atlantic Coast Pipeline – CP15-554-000

Dear Secretary Bose and Deputy Secretary Davis:

On behalf of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, I write to express our support for the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project. The mission of our organization is to develop, promote and implement sound economic strategies to improve the quality of life of rural North Carolinians. We serve the citizens of our state's 80 rural counties, with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources.

The Rural Center believes the Atlantic Coast Pipeline has strong economic benefits for rural North Carolina, and we endorse this project for the following reasons.

**Consumer savings.** Our citizens are looking for a way to save costs at home and in the workplace in any way they can. The Atlantic Coast Pipeline promises to bring consumer savings to North Carolina. Estimates show that once the pipeline is in operation, consumers and businesses in North Carolina would save \$134 million annually in lower energy costs. These savings would make a great difference in the lives of our citizens. In 2014, three of the North Carolina project counties had Median Household Incomes that were less than 65 percent of the national average.

**Jobs.** Estimates show that the project would generate more than 4,400 jobs during construction and more than 900 direct and indirect job when in operation. North Carolina residents in some of our most economically-distressed counties deserve to have these job opportunities.

**Economic development.** Access to natural gas is a strong competitive advantage for industries growing or locating in North Carolina. Currently, the areas along the I-95 corridor are woefully underserved by natural gas. While the ACP is currently 90% subscribed, the 10% available capacity represents a significant amount of natural gas that could in the long term serve new industrial customers.

Furthermore, the capacity of the pipeline could be increased in the future through compression to feed additional distribution lines and even more customers. We believe the long-term recruitment and retention of manufacturing operations made possible by the ACP will play a vital role in the economic development of eastern North Carolina.

Grant Godwin  
Chair

Patrick N. Woodie  
President

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**Tax revenue.** Supporting existing manufacturers and bringing new firms to North Carolina will have a multiplier effect. Not only will these companies bring jobs to rural North Carolinians, but they would also bring new tax revenue to the state. Additionally, the pipeline is expected to contribute nearly \$7.7 million in annual local property tax revenue throughout North Carolina when construction of about 200 miles of pipeline and a compressor station in Northampton County is complete. This tax revenue will assist with public safety, education and other local needs and would greatly benefit some of NC's most economically distressed rural counties.

While the pipeline project brings unquestionable economic potential to the eastern part of North Carolina, the Rural Center does wish to raise concern for certain communities along the pipeline's path. Three American Indian tribes which are state-recognized but not federally-recognized reside in the project counties:

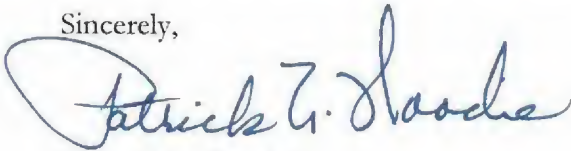
- Haliwa-Saponi Tribe in Halifax & Nash Counties
- Coharie Tribe in Sampson County
- Lumbee Tribe in Robeson County

The draft environmental impact statement only assesses impact for federally recognized tribes, none of which are affected by the North Carolina section of the project. Our state-recognized tribes have the same concerns that a federally recognized tribe would have. While the companies proposing the pipeline have rightfully engaged with tribal leadership as part of their preparatory process, lingering questions remain about communication and remediation of tribal artifacts discovered during pipeline excavation and about emergency response protocols along the pipeline. The Rural Center strongly recommends that further dialogue take place with state-recognized tribes along the pipeline to ensure that concerns are addressed and that all communities in its path may benefit from this project.

The Atlantic Coast Pipeline would bring significant benefits to North Carolina, specifically underserved rural areas seeking economic development opportunities. We believe this project will be an economic driver for our region and that it can be successfully implemented with careful planning, community buy-in and minimal environmental impact.

We support the development of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and urge you to approve this project.

Sincerely,



Patrick N. Woodie  
President

cc: Governor Roy Cooper  
Attorney General Josh Stein  
US Senator Richard Burr  
US Senator Thom Tillis  
US Representative G.K. Butterfield  
US Representative George Holding  
US Representative Walter Jones, Jr.  
US Representative David Price  
US Representative Virginia Foxx

US Representative Mark Walker  
US Representative David Rouzer  
US Representative Richard Hudson  
US Representative Robert Pittenger  
US Representative Patrick McHenry  
US Representative Mark Meadows  
US Representative Alma Adams  
US Representative Ted Budd